**Integrating Differentiated Instruction**

By Tomlinson and McTighe

*Chapter 1:*

This chapter talked about the different sub categories, or axioms, of differentiating instruction and understanding by design in the classroom. It talks about how we have to be flexible to the students that have learning disabilities and to the students who have advanced learning abilities. You have to remember to not forget the students that are in the middle of the learning curve. You have to equip the students with the necessary tools to be successful in your class as well as their future classes. There are seven axioms to think about when planning a lesson, implementing a lesson, and reviewing the results of the lesson.

Axiom one explains that the goal of the curriculum is to deepen the students understanding of the subject. Axiom two says that students need to be given opportunities and support to prove what they have learned during the lesson. Axiom three says to follow the backward design and it explains how all learners will benefit. Axiom four, states to constantly be checking the curriculum assessment and to make changes where necessary. Axiom five says for the teachers to provide opportunities for the students to explore, interpret, and change their way of thinking. Axiom six, talks about technology in the classroom, meeting all student’s needs, and getting advice from specialist. Axiom seven says that the teacher must adapt the teaching methods and tools with the overall goal of bettering the students understanding of the curriculum. As a teacher I have to be constantly thinking of all these to make sure that I am meeting the needs of every student. My goal is to make sure students fully understand what is being taught to them and to make sure that they get the most out of my classroom.

*Chapter 2:*

This chapter really deals with the diversity of each student. It tells how every student learns differently and responds to lessons differently. It tells many stories of students and how the teacher either helped or was unsuccessful in their many methods. It says that the student is the focal point and we must make sure that they are getting everything they can out of their experience and to help them along the way if they are having trouble. As a student assistant, I know how hard it can be to identify the problem a student is having and why their grades are dropping. I have had to motivate students in many different ways to try and get their grades to improve and communication was a key element in that process. This chapter points out the communication between the student, the teacher, the parents, and even the principals. It points out some of the main steps that we as teacher must take in order to become a responsive teacher. It is important to remember that being responsive does not mean that we will be able to understand the needs of every single student because that is next to impossible.

As a teacher I must make sure that I can communicate properly with my students so that I can understand why they may be having trouble and how to help them. As a student assistant, we all came up with four basic steps to help students. Step one is to explore the problem. Step two is to understand why it is happening. Step three is to plan on how we can fix the problem and step four is to implement the plan into action. This can be used almost with any situation and can be changed and vary depending on student and teacher situation. I need to make sure that I have some type of plan on how to deal with students that are struggling and need my help and encouragement socially and academically.

*Chapter 3:*

This chapter talked about the many different teaching and learning standards that not only teachers must fulfill but as well as the students. However, most of the chapter focused on Backward Design. There were three stages to backward design that this chapter covered. Stage one: Identify desire results, is about considering the goals, content standards and review the curriculum expectations. There will always be more content than time which means that we, as teachers, must make choices and prioritize that time. Stage two: Determine acceptable evidence, is about getting teachers and planners to “think like an assessor.” This is done before planning any specific lessons or units. This assessment evidence must mirror the desired results identified in stage one. It means that we must consider in advance the required assessment evidence needed to show that the desired learning has been accomplished. Stage three: Plan learning experiences and instruction, is about asking what kind of knowledge the students need in order to achieve the desired results specified the step two and one. Stage three is also about how to keep the teaching engaging for our students while always knowing what the overall goal is.

As a teacher, backward design can be very useful and handy when making sure that even though you cannot go over all the content, the students learn the goals you’ve planned for them. They learn the goals and they enjoy learning the goals as well. We must make sure we identify every possible part to a lesson to make sure that we are fulfilling not only our own goals and expectations, but the standards of every teacher state-wide as well.

*Chapter 4:*

This chapter talks a lot about how to ensure student success. It is our job as a teacher to ensure that success. The biggest issue in this chapter was making sure that differentiated instruction is the method used in assuring the student and teacher success. There are many things to keep in mind when thinking about and implementing differentiated instruction. The students must have clarity of the curriculum key ideas. The teacher must be able to explain and teach the students the central idea or “representation” of the topic so they can take it with them beyond the classroom. The teacher must understand that even if they think they taught the lesson well, does not mean that all students understood what was being taught. If students do not understand what is being shown or taught to them means that the teacher did not do as well as they hoped. We, as teachers, must take responsibility if our students are not understanding or getting our lessons. Students will find that they have commonalities and differences amongst their peers. However, they must feel that the classroom is a safe environment for them but also that they will be challenged to become their best self. We must be aware of what works best for each student and knowing their intelligence can play a big part in understanding how each student learns as an individual. Classroom management, teaching strategies and routines also help in contributing to the success of the students. Making sure the students know that they have options for learning and knowing that their opinions will vary and change even day-to-day. In order for our students to have success in our classrooms, we must make sure we create the right environment and provide them with the right tools to succeed. It is our job to make sure we teach them so they can succeed outside of our classroom.

*Chapter 5:*

This chapter emphasized that teachers must know how their students are doing in their classroom at all times. The students need to also know how they are doing so that they can improve. Assessments have been proven to be one of the best indicators on how well students know and understand the material being taught to them. There are many different types of assessment and there are some that are thought to be “one size fits all” but that is actually a false accusation. No one student learns exactly the same so why should we assess them all the same? If teachers use diverse and more personalized ways to assess their students than they can get a more accurate of their student’s progress. Having one big test at the end of the year will not be able to show if the student truly understood what was being taught to them. Having multiple assessments throughout the year will give the teacher an opportunity to see if their teaching method is working or if it needs modifications. This way the students are given multiple times to show their understanding and multiple times to make up for it. If students are expected to succeed in the classroom than they need to know what is expected of them. Having established goals helps both the teacher and the student. The student will know what they are supposed to accomplish and the teacher will be able to grade every student evenly according to the goals.

As a teacher I need to understand that every student learns differently. If I know how my students are progressing than I can modify my teachings to make sure they succeed in my classroom. I must give my students multiple opportunities to show me that they have learned what I have taught them and that they can apply that learning to real-world situations and problems. It is important that I know how my students are doing but it is equally as important that my students know how they are doing in my classroom. There is no way a student can progress unless they are given appropriate feedback showing their strengths and weaknesses. All of this is to ensure student understanding and success in the classroom.